

THE CHAMPION

By Ring Lardner

JUDGE KELLY scored his first knockout when he was 17. The knockee was his brother Connie, 3 years his junior and a cripple. The purse was a half dollar given the younger Kelly. The only body he had just missed bumping his soul from his frail little body.

Connie did not know Midge was in the house, else he never would have risked laying the prize on the arm of the last comfortable chair in the room. He was the bartender, his bearing beauty. As Midge entered from the kitchen the cripple covered the coin with his hand, but the movement lacked the speed requisite to escape the brother's quick eye.

"Whatcha got there?" demanded Midge.

"Nothing," said Connie.

"You're a one-legged liar," said Midge.

He strode over to his brother's chair and grasped the hand that concealed the coin.

"Let loose," he ordered.

"Let loose and shut up your noise," said the elder, and jerked his brother's hand from the chair arm.

The coin fell onto the bare floor. Midge pounced on it. His weak mouth widened in a triumphant smile.

"Nothing," he said. "All right, if it's nothing, you don't want it."

"Give that back," sobbed the younger.

"I'll give you a red nose, you little sneak. Where'd you steal it?"

"I didn't steal it. It's mine. A lady give it to me after she pretty near hit me with a car."

"It's a crime she missed you," said Midge.

Midge started for the front door. The crippled bartender clutched his crutch, rose from his chair with difficulty, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"You'd better stay where you're at," he said.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"It's a crime she missed you," said Midge.

Midge got a date for eight bells," he confided. "I got up in the then, only I must clean up and get the Sunday clo's, cause she's the prettiest little thing in Milwaukee."

"Can't you fix it for two?" asked Midge.

"I don't know who to get," Hersch replied. "Wait, though. I've a sister and if she ain't busy, I'll be O. K. She's no bum for looks herself."

So it came about that Midge and Emma Hersch and Emma's brother and the prettiest little thing in Milwaukee found themselves at Wall's and danced half the night.

Midge and Emma danced every dance together, for though every little one-step seemed to induce a new thirst of its own, Lou Hersch stayed too sober to dance with his own sister.

"Gimme a shot," said Midge. The shooting continued until the wind-up at the Star was over and part of the fight crowd joined Midge in front of Duane's bar. A youth in the early twenties, standing next to young Kelly, who'd been maimed enough to require a crutch, asked him.

"Ain't you in the first bout?" he ventured.

"Yeh," Midge replied. "My name's Hersch," said the other.

"I'll give you the startin' information in silence."

"I don't want to but in," continued Mr. Hersch. "But I'd like to buy you a drink."

"All right," said Midge. "But don't overstrain yourself."

"You certainly gave that wop a trimmin' tonight," said the buyer of the drink when they had been served.

"I thought you'd kill him."

"I would if I hadn't let up," Midge replied. "I'll kill 'em all."

"You got to stop all right," the other said admiringly.

"Have I got the wallop?" said Midge. "Say, I can knock like a mule. Did you notice them muscles in my shoulders?"

"I couldn't help from noticing 'em," said Hersch. "I say to the fellas settin' alongside of me, I says, 'Look at them shoulders! No wonder he can hit.' I says to him, 'Just let me land and it's good-bye, baby,'" said Midge. "I'll kill 'em all."

The oral exchange continued until Duane's closed at the night's parting. Midge and his new friend shook hands and arranged for a meeting the following evening.

For nearly a week the two were together almost constantly. It was Hersch's pleasant role to listen to the boy's complaints, to comfort himself and to buy every time Midge's glass was empty. But there came an evening when Hersch reluctantly announced that he must go home to supper.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"You'd better stay where you're at," he said.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist that held the half dollar, he clutched with all his strength on his brother's hand, and, still sobbing, came toward Midge. The latter heard him and stopped.

"I want my money," cried the boy. During the fist